

# HELPFUL RESOURCES

## JOB RESOURCES

### ► CT JOBCENTRAL

An online job bank where individuals can search for jobs as well as upload their resume and access various employment-related information.

1-866-268-6206 or [www.jobcentral.org/ct](http://www.jobcentral.org/ct)

### ► WHERE TO TURN WHEN UNEMPLOYED

The United Way of Connecticut has produced a document titled "Where to Turn in Connecticut When You Become Unemployed." It contains information regarding unemployment insurance, medical benefits, legal assistance and help with job searches and money management. Contact my office at 1-800-842-1420 to receive this helpful publication.



## FOR SENIORS

### ► MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS (MSP)



Individuals who are enrolled in both Medicare and ConnPACE are no longer able to access ConnPACE benefits. Instead, those eligible for Medicare should apply to the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) in order to receive prescription drug assistance. There is no asset test for this program, and the income limits are the same as those for ConnPACE.

MSP offers eligible seniors savings of at least \$1,000 per year in Medicare Part B premiums. The Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy would lower prescription co-payments to \$6.30 or less. For information visit [www.ct.gov/dss/medicaresavingsprograms](http://www.ct.gov/dss/medicaresavingsprograms) or call Infoline at 211, or CHOICES at 1-800-994-9422.

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE & CONSERVATION

### ► SAVE ON YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

**Choose Your Electric Supplier**—The rate you pay for the generation portion of your electric bill may be lowered by ten percent. 1-877-947-3873 or [www.ctenergyinfo.com](http://www.ctenergyinfo.com)

**Home Energy Solutions**—This program helps customers reduce their bills by making their homes more energy-efficient. 1-877-947-3873

**Helping With Payments**—Programs are available to help customers reduce or eliminate their past-due balances. 1-800-286-2828



## RESOURCES FOR FORECLOSURE RELIEF

### ► THE FIRST STEP IN CONNECTICUT

If you're having trouble paying your mortgage, or are facing delinquency or foreclosure, contact one of Connecticut's Housing Counseling Agencies. Each agency is prepared to give advice, screen your eligibility for potential assistance programs and offer other resources to help you keep your home. Call Affordable Housing Center of America, Bridgeport Office: 203-366-4180. You can also contact my office at 1-800-842-1420.



Dear Neighbor:

These are difficult times. Families are struggling, and our national economy still suffers from the impact of the worldwide recession and financial crisis.

Yet we have made good progress here in Connecticut, making the best of a bad situation by balancing the state budget in a fair way and making investments in new industries, new jobs and new educational opportunities.

Partisan differences were set aside to pass an historic Jobs Bill. The legislation will help create thousands of jobs by reducing red tape, cutting taxes for small businesses and investing in training and education.

This newsletter details some of the initiatives we've taken to help our economy and improve your quality of life. Please don't hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

  
Edwin Gomes  
State Senator

## Stay Informed in a "Green" Way



Sign-up to receive my e-mail newsletter. It's a paperless way for me to communicate with my constituents about timely issues that impact our communities and our state. To sign up, visit: [www.SenatorGomes.cga.ct.gov](http://www.SenatorGomes.cga.ct.gov)



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## Fighting for Jobs & the Economy

State Senator

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STATE SENATOR **Edwin A. Gomes**

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## LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS

### Advancing the American Dream

The concept of a new law I supported is simple: all state residents who are graduates of Connecticut high schools should be able to attend community colleges and state universities at the in-state tuition rate regardless of their immigration status. A component of the law requires that these students sign an affidavit vowing to legalize their immigration status. This law would help higher education become accessible for deserving, hard-working students who are pursuing the American dream and ensure that these young adults don't suffer for a decision their parents made very long ago.



### An Equal Education for All

Recognizing that every student has a right to an equal education, the legislature passed a new law that focuses on school readiness—particularly in



underachieving districts—by calling for new math and reading programs specific to students in Pre-K through 4th grade. The law also permits under-performing school districts to expand the length of each school day and to increase the overall number of

school days as desired. By focusing on the early years, and by freeing-up local school boards to fine-tune their school day and year, we hope to close student achievement gaps.

### Sensible Penalties for Marijuana Use

Each year the state spends millions of dollars on punishing people for possessing small amounts of marijuana. We passed a common-sense law that saves taxpayers millions by reducing the penalty for possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana from a class C misdemeanor to a violation, punishable by a fine. Individuals under 21 years old would also have their driver's license suspended for 60 days. By reforming our narcotics laws, we're better able to focus on serious criminals.

## GROWING JOBS

Jobs are the number one issue facing Connecticut today. The General Assembly took action this year to put more people back to work and get our economy growing again. Unlike the partisan gridlock in Washington, both parties came together in Hartford to pass a Jobs Bill of common-sense improvements. The legislature focused on small businesses, **cut the business entity tax in half** and **streamlined state regulations**. Other highlights of the bill include:



- ▶ **Helping small businesses with hiring**—We established a monthly hiring tax credit that increases when businesses hire unemployed, disabled or veteran workers. We also made it easier for businesses to hire new workers for on-the-job training.
- ▶ **Investing in start-ups**—At a time when many banks aren't lending, we invested in new start-up companies by building business incubators and expanding the angel investor tax credit.
- ▶ **Building a workforce of the future**—We will recruit students for vo-tech, agri-science and tech education by promoting their benefits with middle-school parents and local boards of education. We'll also establish manufacturing technology programs at three community colleges.
- ▶ **Investing in infrastructure**—We paved the way for economic development zones at Connecticut's general aviation airports, allocated funds for shovel-ready bridge projects and passed major reforms to lower energy costs and increase energy efficiency.



In separate legislation, the General Assembly took steps to rebuild the UConn Health Center, attracting bioscience leader Jackson Laboratory to build a \$1.1 billion research facility nearby. This will create 900

construction positions and up to 6,000 long-term jobs.

The national economy remains tough, but big steps were taken this year to get Connecticut growing again.

## FOR OUR STATE & OUR COMMUNITY

### Making Cuts While Protecting Municipal Aid

Connecticut's two-year budget includes more than \$1 billion in spending cuts and \$1.6 billion in labor concessions from state employees. It doesn't rely on borrowing or fiscal gimmicks to fund operating expenses, it fully funds the state's pension obligations and it remains under the state spending cap. At the same time, the budget protects state levels of municipal aid, which helps towns and cities avoid raising local property taxes.

As a result, I've ensured that **Bridgeport** and **Stratford** receive their fair share of state funding for education, roads and much more.

### New Facilities at Housatonic Community College

Higher education is the proven path to a better life, which is why I was proud to



support \$4.7 million in state funds this year for new laboratories and building renovations at Housatonic Community College. New biology, anatomy, physiology and chemistry labs will be constructed, and state-of-the-art education technology will be added to 12 existing classrooms. Improving our local opportunities for higher education will mean better paying jobs in the years to come.

### Supporting Our Local Nonprofits

Our community benefits greatly from the tireless efforts of many local charities and organizations. I am proud to have secured up to \$1.2 million in both FY 2012 and 2013 for Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (ABCD). These funds will aid ABCD's Total Learning Initiative, working to close the achievement gap between rich and poor students age 9 and under. I also helped secure \$75,000 in 2012 for Original Works Inc., which engages our young people in dance, music, theater and film.



### Democracy in Public Housing

No one knows a neighborhood like the people who live there. That's why I fought this year to make public housing authorities more accountable to the residents of the communities they serve. I passed a law that will allow public housing tenants to elect a housing commissioner of their choice



to their local housing authority. And I passed another bill to provide tenants with the right to air their grievances with the housing authority at a public hearing.